

A

# REVIEW

## OF THE

# STATE

## OF THE

# BRITISH NATION.

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Tuesday, November 18. 1707.

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**I**T was something Novel, when I told you in the last Paper, that in the Affair of present our Misfortunes, I would send the People of this Age to the *French King* for Instruction, and why not send *English Men* to the *French* to learn, as well as *Solomon* sent the Sluggard to the Ant?

And what must we learn of the *French* now? Says One that scorns to imitate his Neighbours, tho' it be to his Advantage: I'll tell you, Gentlemen, learn two things of them.

1. When ye have lost a Battle, as at *Ramillies*, and find the Enemy pressing you hard, and Victory going over like a Revolver to your Enemies, the Field lost, and the Sea at their Command, the Enemy preparing to invade you, and your own Strength very much lessen'd, and unable to contend. What did the *French King* do? I'll tell you what he did; He publish'd a General Fast, a Day of Humiliation and Deprecation, a Day to mortifie themselves, and humbly implore the Divine Mercy and Assistance; a Day

to confess their Sins, and turn away from them *a-la-mode de Ninus*; If peradventure, the Lord might turn from his fierce Anger, that they perish not—Well, this was their Way, and what was the Consequence, what in it is encouraging to do the same again—Truly, I gave you an Account of that once already, and I am sorry to repeat it—

On that very Day, mark it, *that very Day*, GOD sent a contrary Wind, which lock'd up our Fleet, and detain'd our Army, that was then design'd to insult them, and which they were in no Condition to oppose; and this contrary Wind continued so long, so unusually, so astonishingly long, that for nigh four Months they were ~~ess~~ actually stop'd, and suffering all the Inconveniences of an Army lying long on Board the close Ships, incommoded and unhealthy, we lost our Men, our Horses, our Money, spent our Provisions, &c. and were at last oblig'd to lay aside the Grand Design, and send that Army another way; whereas, if they were follow'd with the same Hand that first

first fought against them, they fell into the Enemies Power, and were almost all of them cut in pieces at *Almanza*—It was on that very Day of the general Humiliation in *France*, that the Wind drove back the Fleet into *Torbay*.

And from that very Day, *I will not attempt to say for what Glorious Ends*, perhaps for their greater Fall, it has pleas'd GOD to restore the Affairs, and raise the Hopes of the *French* in a Manner next to miraculous, and to follow us with a Train of Disasters; which tho' they should not discourage us, should prompt us to consider, and look back both upon the Ways of Providence and upon our own. But

2. To go on with the Affairs of *France*; Among all his Successes this Summer, and the reviving to his Affairs, yet it has pleas'd Heaven also to touch him with his immediate Finger in one sensible Part, *viz.* by an unusual and surprizing Flood of mighty Waters, from the Overflowing of the *Loire*, and other Rivers by excessive Rains, which has drowned and depopulated some of the richest, the pleasanter, and most fruitful Part of all his Country—And what has the King of *France* to say to this?—Immediately he appoints publick Prayers, Confessions and Humiliations over all the Country, to deprecate the Wrath of Heaven, and seek Mercy to the Nation. Oh, go to the *French*, ye Protestants! Go to the *French*!

And now, Gentlemen, what shall we say to this Method of the *French*? Will ye satisfy your selves with saying they are Papists and Idolaters, and so in the Language of the blind Man to the High Priests, *We know that GOD heareth not Sinners, Luke 9. Job 3*? Will this put off the Sense of the Matter from you, and make you ease about it—Go back then to the Citizens of *Nineveh*, who were as great Sinners as the Citizens of *Paris*, nay almost as great as the Citizens of *London*—And yet GOD heard them—The Case is plain, and you need not go to your Casuists to expound it—GOD may hear a Nation so as to adjourn their Destruction, whom he does not hear so as to deliver them; He may hear a People so as to deliver them from the immediate Judgment they deprecate, whom he may not hear savingly, as to Heaven and their Souls; and I need but send you to your Bibles for Instances of this, which are so many, I may spare quoting them.

As for Me, I make this short Use of it, which I draw from the Posture of our present Affairs, and which I recommend to your serious Thoughts, *viz.* Have a Care, Gentlemen, such is the State of *Europe* at this Time, that if GOD should be pleas'd to defer their Destruction, I do not see it possible, he should defer ours.

Go to the *French*, then ye Protestants! That have Victories without Thanksgiving, and Losses without Humiliation; that neither praise GOD for his Mercies, nor pray to him under his Judgments; that think the *French* shall not be heard, because they are Papists, and yet say nothing to be heard your selves, tho' you say you are Protestants; learn of them to pray every Man to his GOD, as the Men of *Tarshish* did in the Ship, when they were in a Storm.

Nor is your Pretence of their Idolatry or false Worship any Objection here; if they call upon a false GOD, if you find Fault with them for their Worship, do you mend it, and call upon the True; either you are mistaken, or you will be apt enough to think your Prayers better than theirs, and I hope, they are better directed; but I am not speaking of the Difference, but of the thing in general, and the Necessity on either Hand; and this brings me to enquire, whether the Exhortation and the Occasion suit or no, whether there be Ground for the Argument or no.

To them that would lessen the Occasion, I have little to say but this; Is not the Ship in a Storm, or at least got in among the Rocks? Has not the direct immediate Hand of Providence appear'd visibly against us in several Particulars, and is it not with infinite Difficulties, that a wise Government steers among so many Dangers, by so many Rocks, and with so many Enemies? Is it not plain, that nothing but the Wonders of Providence have kept us afloat, and struck our Enemies with Trembling? And if that Sovereign Conduct seems for a Time to leave us, and give our Enemies new Courage, Is not this the Time to look up? Is not this the Time to be *Ninevites*? For Shame go learn of the *French*!

But I am told, that to proclaim Fasts, and general Humiliation as a publick Act, would be discouraging, and look like a despairing of our Cause: Unchristian and indeed prophane is that Suggestion!—Why will ye pray without Hope? Certainly, if *Britain* was once a

truly



truly humbled and reformed Nation, she would be a fighting Nation, and I doubt not, would be a victorious Nation too; the Argument is strong the other way, it would be so far from a Discouragement, that I must own to you, I shall never expect to see us a conquering, victorious, successful People, till we are a praying, humbled, reforming People; we cannot be prosperous without it: And call this canting or preaching, or what you please, there have been such Instances of it in the World, that I cannot want enough to illustrate it, but I'll give you one, that I believe, you will little expect from me.

In the late civil Wars here, it was manifest, to avoid more particular Comparisons, that the King's Army and the Parliaments Army differ'd exceedingly in this; that the Kings Army gave themselves a Loose to all Manner of Prophaneness, Vice and ungoverned Debauchery, and the Parliament Soldiers were kept sober, strict and reform'd: The King, whose Morals were strict enough and gave Encouragement enough by his Example, saw the Difference himself, and was so sensible of it, tho' not in his Power to remedy it, having no Power to execute an exact Discipline upon a Volunteer Army; that he express'd himself with a just Concern at it, after one of the Battles he had fought when pressing his Generals to a better Discipline, he told some of them, he foresaw, that GOD did not bless them for the intolerable Wickedness of their Soldiers: I mention this, not only to the Honour of the King's Personal Sobriety, but as to the present Case, it is to the Purpose; the Reformation in the Discipline of the other Forces made them fight with more Boldness, and consequently with a surer Success, and so it would in ours; and here I must digress a little.

If we were to look into our Armies and Camps, but especially into our Fleet, I must own to you, it is a Wonder to me, Heaven should suffer Winds to blow for them, or Ships to swim under them, or Shot to fly for them; that he is not mov'd by the horrid Oaths, Cursings, Ravings, and Blasphemings on Board our Ships, to discharge Nature from obeying her Course with them; that their Damnings and Madness do not stagnate the Sea, and raise Convulsions in the very Elements; that every Breath of Wind is not a Tempest, and that the Waves

do not fly back in a Fright, and leave them splitting on the Bottom; to hear poor ignorant, blinded, intollerable Monsters insulting the Power that made them, and tho' within 6 Inches of Death every Moment, dare GOD Almighty to damn them at every Word.

They tell us there was ONE, and *sad is the Story*, BUT ONE Man sav'd out of the *Rumney* Man of War, which was lost on the Rocks off of *Scilly*. Were that poor Creature but examin'd, and would he tell us faithfully, what Damning, what Swearing, what Raging, Cursing, and Excesses was he Witness to in that Ship, within a Quarter of an Hour before they knew their Danger; or say, *we were to take the whole Day before*— Could a Man print now a lively Description of it, according to the unhappy Usage on Board the rest, for I do not say, that Ship was worse than another; Could this be represented in lively Colours to the Imagination, and then I entreat you, do but fancy you were in View, when in one Moment that hellish Crew were at one Stroke dash'd into Eternity—That Death gave but one Knock at the Door, and made all the Bars of Life fly open at once, and in the two Ships at least a thousand of these Miserables went quick down into the Pit, with hardly Time to cast a Thought towards him that made them, or cry to him for Mercy.

Let any Man, that knows what Sort of People (generally speaking) our Men of War are fill'd with, think upon this without Horror; if he can, he must be a better Christian or a worse than I; it makes a Man's Soul shrink back, and leaves Nature in a Kind of Chill to think of it.

How to remedy this Evil, I confess, is difficult, and how to think GOD should prosper us till it be remedy'd, I know not neither; Her Majesty has express'd a just Concern at this, and I am satisfy'd, would do all that lay in her Power to remedy it—I'll tell you, Gentlemen of the Armies and Navies, two Ways to have this remedy'd; One is, That the Commanders, Captains, and Officers should remedy it, and that must be first by their own Example; and secondly, by strict and exact Discipline; but principally by Example, which would be a happy Beginning.

If you do not think fit to do it this Way, the other is, what I doubt ye are more inclin'd



clin'd to, viz. Sin on, and swear on, and grow more wicked, if that be possible, till GOD Almighty remedies it the shortest way upon you all, *a-la-mode* the Bishop and his Clerks——

In this we may look for Reasons, why our *Englifo* Israel flies before her Enemies; if you will take a Course for the Cure, look to the Words which GOD Himself spoke to *Joshua*; he was beaten twice by the Enemy, and he first like, a good Man went to Humiliation, *the very thing I have been talking of*, what says the Voice to him, *Joshua* 7. 10. *Get thee up, wherefore liest thou thus on thy Face? ISRAEL HATH SINNED.* Will you examine, why you lost the Battle at *Almanza*, and the Ships at *Szilly*, there's the Reason—Get ye up then, and remove these atur'd things, the Debaucheries and Prophaneness, the horrid Oaths and Blasphemies, both of Army and Fleet: How should you look Enemies in the Face with these abominable things among you?

Instead of this, we are all talking of Means and Instruments; if we gain, we cry up our Heroes; if we lose, we curse our Management, but no man enquires, why all this Evil is come upon us—While things go thus, GOD may indeed give you some Successes; but if ever he brings to pass the great Work of Establishing the Protestant Religion in the World, and building up his Church by such a Generation as this, he will act contrary to all the Rules we have to judge by; or the Foundation we have to hope for it upon, and in a different Way from all his usual Providences in the World.

You complain of Instruments, and the Managers of things, *I tell you*, this is enough to blast the best Management, and curse the Endeavours of all your Governours, and make the honestest Measures for the Nation's Good prove imperfect and abortive. In vain you go Church, and pray for the QUEEN; while your Vices reign in the Nation, you dethrone Her Majesty's Authority, you sully the Glory of her Reign, you curse her Blessings, and tempt GOD to assist her for your Sakes; you endeavour to your utmost to involve her Majesty in your Ruin, and employ your whole Power to bring down Judgments upon her Head and your own.

Her Majesty, a Princess of Singleness, of Soul, exact Piety, and consummate Virtue, would do all that can be desir'd to make you Happy, Flourishing and Glorious, and GOD has eminently bless'd her Royal Endeavours; but where is your Loyalty, where your Obedience to your Prince? when you make War against Heaven, you rebel against your QUEEN, you insult her Peace, you sell her Glory, and betray her Happiness.

I do not tell you, you are capable to purchase Victory by your Reformation, but I pretend to tell you, that you are capable of pulling down Vengeance by your Vickedness; and you cannot but allow, it is your Duty to remove that horrid Negative out of the way of your Expectations, and not put your selves in such a Posture, as that GOD cannot save you, without seeming to encourage the Blasphemers of his Name, to glory over his general Justice, and think, he has alter'd the common Method of his Dealing with his Creatures.

Reformation and general Deprecation in short is the Subject; and if any Man asks how this may be done, *I say*, let him begin with himself, and show the Example to his Neighbour, nor let him cry to his Neighbour, do you begin first: I would recommend to every Man to begin with himself, I desire to take the Advice first, and then give it, and heartily wish, every Body would begin with the same Sincerity.

And yet I am not so general a Complainer, as not to own every thing, I see, that is encouraging; and I do therefore think my self oblig'd to acknowledge, the Societies for Reformation in both Parts of this Island, have gone a great VVay in this VVork, *tho' of late we have seen them too much slack and discourag'd*; I cannot but think this a Time for, and a particular Summons to them, to renew their Endeavours, and not to be remiss in a thing, which so much concerns the Glory of GOD, and the Good of the whole Nation—Nor can any Man, that calls himself a Christian, satisfy himself to sit still, and not be assistant to every one that puts his Hand to this VVork.